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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 005098

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/02/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: DFA ON MEDIA REPORTS RE US-RP RELATIONSHIP

Classified By: A/DCM Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Acting Foreign Secretary Edsel Custodio called in Charge d'Affaires Jones to DFA on November 2 to receive an aide memoire (full text in para 6) regarding recent media reports purportedly based on alleged US Embassy documents that the GRP believes are "aggravating political tensions and deepening political diversions in the Philippines." CDA acknowledged that such reports possibly could create political tensions here and promised to report the aide memoire's contents to Washington. He said that the media reports conveyed a distorted picture of the US' relationship with the Philippines and with its political leadership and did not reflect the policies or perceptions of the USG. He added, however, that since there was an ongoing criminal investigation related to the apparent theft of USG classified information, the Embassy would not comment on individual reports, even to deny them. He noted that he would describe the important nature of our bilateral relationship and cooperation between our two governments in a November 3 speech to the combined Rotary Clubs of Manila, and added that upcoming visits by USAID Assistant Administrator Kunder and EAP DAS John would provide further evidence of our continued cooperation.

12. (C) CDA urged the GRP to keep the focus on our substantive agenda, with which Secretary Custodio agreed. Along these lines, he congratulated the GRP for the capture of leaders of the Rajah Solaiman Movement on October 26, and urged continued close cooperation on counterterrorism. He expressed appreciation for the reservations about the impact on trade that the GRP had expressed during the deliberations on the UNESCO cultural diversity convention. He encouraged the GRP to speak out at the WTO and with the EU for greater liberalization of agricultural trade, which would be in the interest of the Philippines. He requested GRP consider co-sponsorship of the designation by the 1267 Committee of three individual Abu Sayyaf Group members, and requested a decision by November 4, noting that embosfs have already discussed this issue in depth with the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Task Force.

13. (C) Custodio expressed special concern about recent articles in the "Tribune" that had included negative comments about President Arroyo allegedly made by Foreign Secretary Romulo to an Embassy poloff in October 2004 and in the Philippine Daily Inquirer allegedly linking former President Ramos to coup plots. CDA acknowledged the seriousness of such allegations, noted that he had already requested to meet with former President Ramos, and encouraged Secretary Romulo directly to deny such reports about his alleged remarks.

14. (U) To journalists gathered outside the Secretary's suite after the meeting, CDA reiterated the important nature of our bilateral relationship, and highlighted the upcoming visits as opportunities further to advance our substantive agenda.

15. (C) Embassy proposes to respond to the aide memoire with the following diplomatic note:

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and has the honor to reiterate the importance the Government of the United States places on its alliance and partnership with the Republic of the Philippines, as well as on valued relationships with political leaders and governmental officials of the Republic of the Philippines.

16. (C) Text of aide memoire
Begin quote

The Department of Foreign Affairs has asked the Embassy of the United States of America to this meeting because of the strong desire of the Philippine Government to have these matters clarified.

The Philippine Government intends to act on these matters, and would like to do so only after having gathered the appropriate facts and information.

A number of media reports have made certain claims and allegations on what appears to be policies and perceptions of

the United States Government with regard to the Philippine and its leadership. These media reports cite U.S. Embassy reports as basis.

The claims and allegation that have been made are a source of grave concern for the Philippine Government in general, and its desire to maintain friendly and harmonious relations with the United States Government, in particular. These claims and allegations are also contributing to further aggravating political tensions and deepening political diversions in the Philippines.

The Philippine Government is interested in ascertaining if these claims and allegations are true, in whole or in part, and if these are reflective of the current policy of the United States Government with regard to the Philippine Government and with regard to the relations between the Philippines and the United States.

The Department of Foreign Affairs would appreciate receiving the views of the U.S. Embassy on these matters.
end quote

Jones